

# THE BUILDER.

NO. 71.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1845.

There is a certain place in London called "The Row." It is known familiarly by this designation among the booksellers and publishers. Our good friends of the latter class have been amusing themselves, we hear, by speculating on the duration of our existence, and have even been so profane as to make it the subject of wagers, treating the grave matter of our death with such reprehensible frivolity! Our reporter, poor fellow, has been disposed to run the risk of five shillings in our favour. We suppose he is content to lose it, if he loses us, of whom he is pleased to have so good an opinion. Twenty weeks, that is to say twenty numbers, form the limit assigned for our lease of life. We cannot treat the matter as a joke, whatever our readers may, or the gentlemen of Paternoster-row; and we importune them not to feel about their wagers as prophets do about their predictions,—namely, determined to bring the event to pass by all the means in their own power.

Yes, we entreat them to look a little more indulgently upon us, if only for the sake of the class we represent; let them remember that we, meaning the class, have been good friends to them, and are still among the best of their friends; that, from the little horn-book of the Messrs. Darton to the ponderous tomes of their Longman & Co., we have been among the best of their customers and readers; our own, and now we speak of our individual selves, our own early days owe some of their most distinct impressions to Birch and books from Paternoster-Row, and not a small number of the five hundred thousand of our class have similar vivid reminiscences; it is true that we have not been over particular, taking with gratitude even whatever the gentlemen of "The Row" chose to send, or thought was best for us, we have been content to herd with the crowd of aspirants to their favours, and never questioned, or inquired, whether we were not, from our numbers, pursuits, and importance, entitled to some special editing, that bore upon the crafts we respectively exercised, or if vouchsafed a little in this way, found fault that it was so hard to find in the corner of some despised and obscure page of their folios—or that it was treated in a very mysterious manner, looking most like, we do not know which, profound knowledge or profound ignorance. All this we have been most submissive and most patient in—and withal, and now we raise our caps, we have been good paymasters—for the sake of all this then, let us plead for and obtain a little of friendly feeling, we come to extend the boundaries of profitable intercourse—we still love the sight of your books—a bookseller's parcel is to us as gladdening as a block of fine-grained marble to the statuary—we long to extend the working of the quarry—in sober business then, good gentlemen of "The Row," we entreat you not thus to speculate upon our downfall.

And now, good readers, we turn to you—what we have just said, you will see how we have verified all our statements as to the incredulity with which our chance of success was regarded; and by this you have a measure of the difficulty of the task we have undertaken. We say this to spur you forward to greater ex-

ertion? No! it would be ungrateful in us to attempt it; you have been already too generous and too approving—our unworthy efforts have been appreciated far above their deserts—we have not yet taken our stand upon the ground to be assigned to us, and you are indulgent the while. No Builder's instructor has ever yet succeeded—no previous path was open to us, and yet the way is not rugged, nor the impediments unwholesome; it is not for us to boast or vaunt of what we are disposed or determined to accomplish—the gentlemen of "The Row" may be right, but if they are, it is through our demerits that they must be confirmed; it cannot be that five hundred thousand builders cannot support their own threepenny weekly paper. It shall not be. Thus we throw them upon their own mettle: THE BUILDER shall not be abandoned; if our hands are unworthy to conduct, it we will resign it to those of the worthiest bidder. THE BUILDER must live though our unworthy selves should die.

And now having made up our minds to this heroic self-denial; having preferred the success of our cause to the mere identifying of it with ourselves, we will take a leaf out of the books of some of our contemporaries; we shall begin and beg for advertisements.

Let none be offended with us for our plain speaking,—we go not round about to show that our circulation is our warranty,—we bring out no parade of stamp returns or the other evidence of extensive sale, to prove the superiority of THE BUILDER as an advertising medium, and by implication to say to the advertiser, take your advertisements from this or that paper, and give them to us. No, we simply ask them to extend their patronage to this new vehicle, and we promise them that, sooner or later, the profit will be abundantly compensatory.

Is it so unusual a thing that they should mix up a little favour with business dealings? we warrant it not; and surely we have shewn to many that it would be no more than a return of favour. In plain speech, gentlemen booksellers, we, the Builders, have been good customers to you; do you, in this our new capacity, be good customers to us.

We might affect to say that we are not anxious—but this would be a rank untruth,—we will neither say so, nor pretend so—for of the two species of lying, we prefer the point-blank to the shuffling and equivocating—we are anxious, and we will tell you more, gentlemen, we are anxious on your behalf as well as for our own. We would seek an early and a graciously-established intimacy—we would fain that our mutual reliance were not begun upon a cold measurement of our respective strengths, or rather upon your strength and our weakness—we would not, in fine, have it said that you came to our aid when we did not require it, or rather that you never came to our aid at all.

And now for our country friends, as well as for some nearer home—we see many of their advertisements in the provincial and London papers, let us remind them to think of "THE BUILDER" as well—we do not tell them, nor do we tell our friends in "The Row" that we can select, but we think that we very soon shall be so—a fortnight ago it was enough for us to print 2,000 copies of our paper, but we find ourselves run out, we increased our 2,500, and are in little better plight—this week we go to press with 3,000—with No. II. we are obliged to go to press again.

## HABITATIONS AND HEALTH OF THE INDUSTRIOUS CLASSES.

THE interest we hold in discussions on these subjects is two-fold; the application of right principles in the adaptation of buildings, and the advocacy of all liberal views tending to increase the comfort, and, consequently, to improve the health, of the working population. The time is favourable to such improvements; the removal of disgustingly crowded and filthy neighbourhoods for the formation of new lines of thoroughfare, and the certainty that the ejected population must, unless the duty of providing seemly dwellings is entered upon, have recourse to a still closer packing of similar localities, calls for prompt action.

We have already given (No. 39) our opinions in pretty strong terms on the apathy with which these subjects have been regarded. The positions and state of the houses in which a large proportion of these classes are compelled to congregate have been appallingly described, in every instance where inquiry has been instituted, whether on public grounds or incidentally, as connected with medical or ordinary statistics, and a fearful amount of responsibility rests with all who, having the power, deny or delay the means of amelioration. You, the followers and worshippers of philanthropy in its many protean shapes, turn to this, one of the bases of order, and of the civil unities by which the fabric of society may be best upheld; improve the dwellings of the artisan and labourer, induce the self-respect attendant upon the decencies of domestic life, and thereby originate the germs of a morality of which the absence is fraught with reproach and danger.

For the moment, we refrain from going further, when so much remains to be said, to take up the twin branch of this interesting topic; namely, the sustenance of the physical energies on which labour depends, in which we are effectively assisted by the work of Mr. J. H. CERTIS, the celebrated Artist, entitled, "OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRESERVATION OF HEALTH."

Though we cannot follow the author as we could wish, through the ramifications into which his subject is necessarily divided, we will endeavour to extend its usefulness by applying the authority of his opinions in aid of our class, and of our cause. No single chapter, it is to be regretted, could consistently be devoted to an exposure as large of the evils under which the working population of this and other great cities of the empire are suffering in the crowded and stagnant localities almost prescriptively assigned to them, but detached observations tending to strengthen the loud call for generous intervention are numerous, and we willingly commence our extracts with a paragraph on the duties of public men.

"As regards public happiness, statesmen and politicians too often forget that though good political institutions conduce to it, yet that they are but one means to the attainment of this end, and that more than these are requisite to make individuals and nations happy. The cultivation of good-will, kindness, humanity, and all the gentler affections, is far more important in the promotion of private happiness than the juster balance of the political constitution can be; so that though the value of civil and religious liberty is great, and has a large influence on national well-being, still it alone does not constitute happiness; and therefore it seems to me that those writers who devote their energies to the task of endeavouring to soften and improve the social affections do incomparably more to promote the benefit of communities than those who have only in view what is more strictly designated 'the public weal.'"

This remark is of great practical value; it indicates that it is not to mere perfection in the machinery of a government that we are to look for the happiness of a people, but rather to the exercise of the paternal principle, through agencies which promote the kindlier feelings of our nature, which reconcile the producers of wealth to prepare its harvests, and so rest contented with the gleanings allotted to industry.

Now with respect to the health of the working classes there are certain elementary requirements, which consist of dry and commodious habitations, air, and light, and the consequence of their deficiency is thus depicted.

"The functions of the body are so closely connected with the operations and feelings of the mind, that it may safely be asserted, a healthy community